

The President's Notebook

An article in the London Philatelist of November 2013 caught my attention and sent me scurrying down to the premises of the Royal Philatelic Society London. The article by Chris King FRPSL referred to the donation by Derek Weston of a pair of scrapbooks created by the eminent philatelist John Henry Chapman (1860-1942). Chapman was President of both the Sheffield and Leeds Philatelic Society. He was Chairman of the 1921 Harrogate Philatelic Congress and a member of the Permanent Executive Committee. He signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1926. My visit to London proved to be more valuable than anticipated for several reasons.

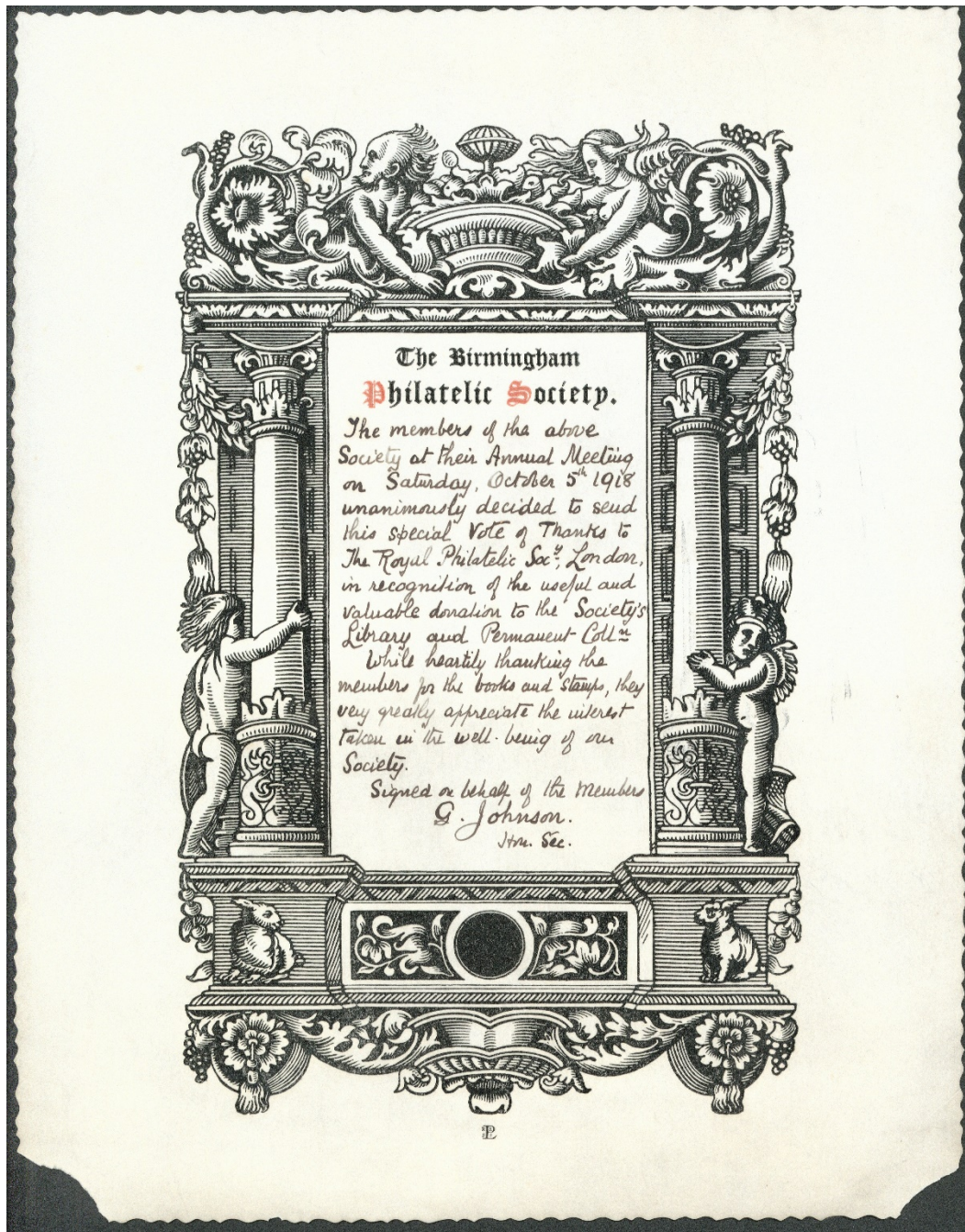
Firstly, the scrapbooks (RPSL ref. GPR-ORG-CONGRESSES-303531) contained press cuttings, telegrams, letters and photographs relative to the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain between 1921 and 1929. There was only one item in the files relating to the 1929 Congress which was held at the Midland Hotel in Birmingham and that was a photograph of the delegates



Visit to Fort Dunlop of
MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, June 5th, 1929.

Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Philatelic Society London

when they visited the Dunlop factory on the afternoon of June 5th. The Year book states that the Company provided the transport to and from the venue and tea for all the delegates. The Dunlop Rubber Co. Ltd was set up in Birmingham in 1901 to manufacture Dunlop tyres, initially for bicycles and later for motor vehicles. At one time it was the world's largest factory, when it employed 3,200 workers, however, the increased number of foreign cars imported into Britain led to a decline in demand and the company was sold in the 1980s. The factory will close in September 2014, and production will move to Germany and France.



Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Philatelic Society, London

Whilst I was at the Royal the archivist, Mark Copley, showed me a rather sparse file relative to the Birmingham Society (RPSL ref. 301035) consisting of copies of the early issues of *Communiqué* and also an engraved acknowledgement on vellum thanking the Royal for a donation of books to the library and material for the 'Permanent Collection'.

From the Society minutes of October 4th 1919 it would appear that similar acknowledgments were given to 'all who had contributed more than £10, as an appreciation of their generosity'.

No details are available of the items given by the Royal for the Permanent Collection but in the Society's Annual Report for 1917/18 there is a reference to the Royal's donation of a 'Valuable lot of British & Foreign Periodicals, bound and unbound' to the library.

Now, separately to this I had received an email from a Mr Stuart Henderson requesting a copy of the publication *'Birmingham Philatelic Society- the first thirty years'*. After a series exchanging emails it transpired that he was interested in the publication because ... "In the mid 1990s, I purchased a large mixed accumulation in three boxes at a Phillips auction. At the bottom of one box were the two minute books.". He goes on to say that he then contacted a someone who may have been an officer of the Birmingham Society and offered to send the books back but was told in no uncertain terms that we were not interested in them. You can imagine my reaction to that revelation!

Very generously Stuart posted the two books concerned to me and they have now been included as part of our archives. The one book comprises the minutes for the years 1919 to 1927 and the other for the General Meeting minutes only for the period 1927 to 1929. Our secretary likes to delve into the previous minutes so I will leave that to him but there were a couple of items relative to the 1929 Congress that attracted my attention.

At the AGM held on October 5th 1929 Mr Grindall submitted the 120 page transcript notes of the Congress meetings and press cuttings from all parts of the country. There were also the printing blocks for the Congress report book and also those for the member's photographs – presumably those that were featured in the report. 33 books were at that point still unsold and were to be offered at 4/4d ((22p) each post free.

It was also stated that Mr Oliviri (?) "has sent a signed portrait of Sir William Avery to Mr Grindall but the glass and frame were broken in transit. It was suggested that the Presidents of the Society should keep this photo. Mr Davis suggested that a scrap book for the Congress Newspaper Reports should be bound." Where are they now?

A further coincidence occurred in January when our Secretary told us that he had managed to obtain, from a UK based supplier, a silver-gilt medal issued during our Jubilee year of 1936. A few days later I typed 'Birmingham Philatelic Society' into e-bay and up popped a bronze medal issued for our 1936 Jubilee, this time the supplier was based in America, naturally I made sure that I secured it despite a heavy import duty tax.



So, fellow members, the moral of this tale, if there is one, is that there are still items out to be discovered that we do not know about but to find them we need patience, an enquiring mind but most important of all – a lot of luck!